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United States Navy Chaplain Corps



Darold Bigger
RDML, CHC, USNR

Matthew Bremer
RPCM, USNR

Admiral's Call: Chaplain Darold Bigger

Religious Ministry Team Members:

During recent months we've been supporting service members who were engaged in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Many Religious Ministry Team (RMT) members were mobilized, most to assignments in the U.S. Some were overseas, with a few to the Middle East. Even as demobilization begins for other service members, some mobilizations continue. Our prayers have been with you all and with those of you who have waited and wondered if a call might come for you as well. Thank you for standing by, and for being ready and willing to respond.



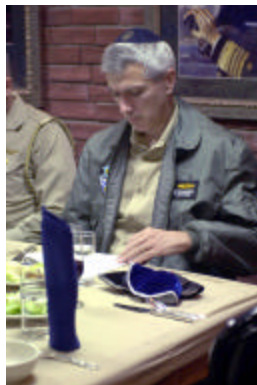
Chaplain Bigger in a helicopter on his way to visit ships in the Northern Gulf

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Our work is not over. In addition to operational assignments and the work of those who remain mobilized, we continue to provide crucial support for service members and families. While we are grateful that the casualty count was no higher than it was, the pain of each loss is very real, and the impact of war will linger in the minds and memories of many who look perfectly healthy. Many of their families have been preoccupied with concern for Mom, Dad, brother, sister, son or daughter and will appreciate support as they decompress and their loved one returns. They need you and the life-transforming service you can provide.

In addition to operational recalls, several Reserve chaplains have been mobilized to augment CREDO staffs. They will be debriefing returning service members and helping them reintegrate into home and family. Others of you will work through your Reserve units as part of your regular assignment. Whatever your capacity, know that your affiliation is very important and your work is highly valued.



May God bless you all,

Darold Bigger

The Arabian Gulf (April 17, 2003) — RADM Samuel Jones Locklear, Commander CRUISER DESTROYER GROUP-5 (CCDG-5), reads from the Passover Hagaddah (prayer book) during a Passover Seder dinner in the wardroom aboard USS NIMITZ (CVN 68). U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Tiffini M. Jones. (RELEASED)

The *Religious Reserve Ministries Newsletter* is published for Naval Reserve chaplains and RPs who serve with Naval Reserve Forces Command, the Marine Forces Reserve, and the USCG.

RDML Darold Bigger
CHC, USNR
Deputy Chief of Chaplains for Total Force

RPCM Matthew Bremer
Senior Enlisted Advisor

CAPT Stephen Linehan
CHC, USNR
CNRF Force Chaplain

RPCS Kevin Hendrickson
Force RP

CAPT Moses Stith
CHC, USN
MFR Chaplain

RPCS Anthony Childers
Force RP

RRMN Editors
CDR Barry Crane, CHC, USNR
CDR Anne Krekelberg, CHC, USN

APPLY Reminder

Important deadlines are coming up for the FY04 National Command and Senior Officer Non-command/Billet Screening and Assignment Board. Better known as the APPLY board, this is the place where decisions are made about the assignment of Naval Reserve Senior Chaplains to specific pay billets. You are encouraged to register early, apply early and check out the APPLY website below for further information. Please note the following dates:

01 May 03:	Last day to register in the APPLY online program
18 May 03:	Last day to change dreamsheets
06 Jun 03:	Last day for consideration of correspondence by board
16 Jun 03:	Board convenes
11 Jul 03:	Board results released
31 Jul 03:	Last day to accept or decline billet

APPLY BOARD

Further information and online registration are available at:

<https://apply.nola.navy.mil>

Uniform Information

It is hard to overestimate the importance of chaplains and RPs wearing their uniforms correctly. Here is some important information regarding name tags and a helpful suggestion on how to carry the garrison cap.

Velcro-backed leather nametag shall be made of plain black leather in 2" x 4" dimension. Name and rank shall be embossed in block letters, ¼ inch high, in gold for officers/CPOs, and in silver for E6 and below. Only one earned breast insignia may be worn (patrol pins not authorized). The insignia (silver or gold) shall be embossed above the individual's name. In other words, no officer's crest/rank insignia, enlisted rank insignia or specialty mark is authorized.

There is no current official policy for carrying the garrison cap. However, it is acceptable to pass the garrison cap under the belt on the wearer's left side between the two belt loops closest to the belt buckle. The opening of the garrison cap should be to the wearer's left with the insignia facing out. "Why the left side?" Because we wear ribbons/medals/breast insignia and (most) badges on the left.



*Proper uniform wear is crucial
for all Sea Service personnel*

How I Became an RP

By RP1 Orville Dombrosky

It took over three years of constant effort for me to join the military. I joined late in life and it seemed that great pains were taken to stall, delay, or prohibit this older fellow from swearing in. Trying to join one of the various services, I filled out — and refilled out — paperwork, tested and retested, and conducted several physicals. When I reached age 35, my attempts were dismissed and no recruiter would speak with me. I made telephone calls and wrote letters to anyone who I thought would listen or help. Trying to get a waiver seemed futile. Politicians and generals alike made sure I understood there was nothing that could be done — it was too late, sorry. Many requests went unanswered.

It was a disappointing situation because I had a true desire to serve. It wasn't because of college tuition or to have a job, those had been taken care of long ago. Hearing about the Navy APG program gave hope. I was 36 years of age when I spoke to a recruiter about the APG program. The only position offered, where I had previous experience, was the SK rate. However, documented experience within the previous year was needed. My last involvement with work relating to the SK rate was 15 years prior, but my desire to serve was strong.

I asked a friend of mine who owned a sign and supply company for a part time position. Knowing he didn't really need help, I told him I would work for free. I did so for six months, along with keeping up all other aspects and involvements of my life. With this documentation, I swore in at age 36 ½ on November 7, 1991. I was attached to a SIMA unit,

then to Combat Zone Fleet Hospital 21. However, I wanted to become more involved; to get into a unit or detachment where I could serve in a more forward position — the more forward the better. Again, I was denied.

Being unable to reach my goal one way, I improvised. The RP rate was introduced to me. After doing some research, I found the duties coincided with my interests, and attachment to the Marine Corps was more in line with how I had hoped to serve. After an interview with a Navy chaplain (Chaplain Hernandez of 1/23 in Houston), I proceeded with the paperwork for a rate conversion and attachment to 1/23. It took nine months for this process to be approved. As of this writing, I have served as an RP for three years with 1/23 in Houston; the last year and a half with Chaplain Abraham Ramirez. Having trained with an exercise (CAX), Mountain Warfare, and going to Chaplain and RPs Expeditionary Skills Training (CREST), I am more than willing and able to do my duty anywhere, anytime with my chaplain.

Although I have some mileage behind me, there is not a recruit coming out of basic training or boot camp that wears the uniform of the United States military with more pride or conviction than I do. I wear this uniform by choice, ready to sacrifice all whenever—wherever.



Religious Program Specialist

Reserve Chaplain Serves in Djibouti

Chaplain (CAPT) Ron Klose, Deputy 4th FSSG Chaplain is having one of the great adventures of his ministry as he serves at the Enduring Freedom Chapel at Camp Lemonier, in Djibouti, Africa.

Chaplain Klose is serving in a Joint and international environment. Protestant services are provided by Chaplain Klose and an Air Force chaplain who is serving the Air Force Special Forces. Catholic service members are served by lay leaders and the local French and German chaplains.

The main function of Camp Lemonier is to detect, disrupt and deny transnational terrorism. This is especially meaningful to Chaplain Klose as his civilian parish is just outside New York City. Many of his parishioners were deeply affected by the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

The Command Religious Program is served by RPCS Quinn and RP3 Burns. They sponsor several outreach efforts, including three orphanages. At one site, they help the Sisters of the Nativity feed 54 babies several times a week. They are also goodwill ambassadors to local villages.



Naval Reserve chaplain Ron Klose stands outside the chapel at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti, Africa.



Chaplain Klose poses with "new friends". The Command Religious Program sponsors a number of outreaches.

News From MARFORRES

MARFORRES Welcomes Two New Staff Members. Chaplain (CDR) Ronald Howard and RP1 Stephen Mukes were both mobilized to augment the MFR headquarters staff in support of OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE and OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM. Chaplain Howard, who serves as the Deputy MFR Chaplain, can be reached directly at (504) 678-6119 or e-mail HowardRE1@mfr.usmc.mil. RP1 Mukes serves as the LPO and Office Manager and can be reached at (504) 678-6633 or e-mail MukesSE@mfr.usmc.mil. Everyone can still be contacted through our toll free number at (866) 226-7159.

CACO and Funeral Support. MARFORRES requests that all reserve chaplains, whether green or blue side, make themselves available in their respective areas to assist with CACO and funeral support. You can do this by contacting RP1 Mukes at (866) 226-7159 or email MukesSE@mfr.usmc.mil, or by contacting your Regional Chaplain. Chaplains who conduct funerals can receive pay for one day, coordinated through CNRF chaplain's office. However, MFR will fund travel, lodging, and per diem expenses for any chaplains who need to travel outside a 50-mile radius to conduct a funeral for any USMC personnel.

CREST There is a special CREST course starting 11 May through 14 June to allow for reserve RP training and the NEC required for deployment with Marines. Chaplains are also invited to attend the second half of the course (27 May - 14 June). The CREST-R course is still available for chaplains. It starts on 14 July and is completed on 1 August. Please contact or email Senior Chief Childers at (866) 226-7159 or email ChildersAD@mfr.usmc.mil.

National Defense Service Medal

Eligibility for the National Defense Service Medal has been extended to members of the Armed Forces who served in the capacity of a selected reservist on or after 11 September 2001.

The National Defense Service Medal was established in 1953 by President Dwight Eisenhower. It recognized honorable military service between 27 June 1950 and 27 July 1954. It was also awarded to those who served between 1 January 1961 and 14 August 1974, and for those who served between 2 August 1990 and 30 November 1995.

If a service member has already received a National Defense Service Medal, a bronze star is authorized. Those who have not previously received the National Defense Service Medal should purchase the medal and ribbon from a military clothing store.



Home

I want to tell you of an experience I had last night flying home from Atlanta.

The pilot came on the intercom and went through the usual announcements telling us that “we’re just east of Montgomery cruising at 28,000 feet” and “you’ve picked a beautiful night for flying, just look at the gorgeous southern sunset out of the right side of the plane.” He then, however, said this: “Please bear with me as I deviate from the script, but I want you all to know that simply by coincidence you have been granted both the privilege and honor of escorting the body of Army PFC Howard Johnson, Jr. home tonight. PFC Johnson was killed in Iraq defending the freedoms we all enjoy, and fighting to extend those freedoms to the people of Iraq. We are also accompanied by PFC Johnson’s cousin, Marine Major Talley, who has been chosen by the family to escort PFC Johnson home. Semper Fi!”

The plane quickly became very quiet, but soon erupted in thunderous applause that lasted for several minutes. It was quite moving, to say the least. As I sat there thinking about what the pilot had said, and visualizing PFC Johnson’s dead body riding below me in the belly of that plane, I noticed a couple of things. Two rows in front of me sat a father holding his daughter, an infant, and they were practicing “ma-ma,” and in the row behind me was another young boy, probably two or so, learning to count to 10. Now obviously both are too young to realize we’re at war, or that one of our dead was with us, but it made me think, and this is the point: These warriors, mostly young, all volunteers, everyday are prepared to give their lives for our future, for a safer, more secure future for people they don’t even know, all based on the principle that fighting and dying for this country is worth it.

By the way, the flight ended with all of us deplaning only to line the windows of the gate house to watch PFC Johnson’s body, draped in the American flag, be rolled out of the plane and into a waiting hearse that was surrounded by his family members.

Please pray that our soldiers’ sight is acute, their aim is true, and that as many come home as God can spare.

From the Internet: forwarded by RADM G. G. Cotton

“The plane quickly became very quiet, but soon erupted in thunderous applause that lasted several minutes”

President Authorizes Two New Medals

A recent Presidential Executive Order authorized the creation of two new medals for service in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). The GWOT Expeditionary Medal recognizes those who served in an expedition to combat terrorism on or after September 11, 2001 as a part of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM. The GWOT Service Medal is limited to OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE, and those who supported OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM outside the area authorized for the GWOT Expeditionary Medal. More information will be published as it becomes available.

Naval Reserve Forces Command (N01G)
4400 Dauphine Street
New Orleans, LA 70146-5000

Phone: 800.245.4546
Fax: 504.678.5569
Email: laycock@cnrf.navy.mil

**Back issues of the Reserve
Religious ministries
Newsletter are available at:
<http://www.chaplain.navy.mil>**

United States Naval Reserve chaplains and Religious Program Specialists serve the needs of the men and women of the United States Navy, United States Marine Corps and the United States Coast Guard by providing for the free exercise of religion and spiritual ministry around the world. Actively serving during peacetime, Naval Reserve chaplains and RPs are also available for mobilization in time of war to meet the needs of sea service personnel whenever and wherever they are called upon.

United States Navy Chaplain Corps



*"Support the Navy-Marine Corps team
with mission ready units, equipment,
and individuals"*